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If They Would Just Hush and Pay Attention

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Title

If They Would Just Hush and Pay Attention

Relevance

The session is related to 5H Conference Strands I (“Head”: Academic Achievement and Leadership) and II (“Hear”: Social and Emotional Skills). The goal of the session is to provide educators with steps to establishing a classroom culture where students work with a purpose, collaborate with peers, frequently engage in discourse and accept mistakes as steps toward achievement. The strategies and information that are discussed address college and career readiness, standards-based instruction, engaging students in content-specific literacy practice via students’ voice and cooperative learning and creating a sense of community in classrooms. The primary focus of the session is empowering students to apply their knowledge, skills and voice to serve as leaders of self and community.

Brief Program Description

An interactive session that prepares educators to apply literacy strategies such as “Real-Talk” to overcoming the challenges associated with engaging post-millennials in college and career aligned skill practice. The presenter demonstrates how to plan standards-based instruction that incorporates students’ voice as a tool for empowering students to apply their verbal and written communication skills to complete content-specific (i.e., social studies, ELA, science, etc.) assignments.

Summary

As advances in education take place we must ask ourselves, are young people being exposed to learning and practice that align with the performance demands that they will encounter during their college and career experiences? This session focuses on building a culture of achievement in which students’ voice is used as a tool for supporting them with developing the literacy skills that will help them thrive in academic and professional settings.

There are educational initiatives that aim to do things such as increase students’ exposure to technology with the aspiration of making students more college and career ready. However, businesses and corporations in the United States are saying that being able to do things such as create a spreadsheet and navigate the web are not the problem. They state that many of the young professionals that they hire struggle with soft skills such as collaborating with colleagues and developing original ideas. Additionally, the Partnership for 21st-Century Skills reported that employers said that one-fourth of college graduates lack proper verbal and written communication skills. These issues represent the need for student-centered instruction that align with college and career performance demands.

During the session the presenter will provide examples of assignments that engage students in college and career aligned literacy practice. The presenter will also explain and model learning strategies that incorporate students’ voice as a resource for motivating students to practice with a purpose and work with a sense of urgency as they complete assignments.

A factor that determines the impact that engaging students in college and career aligned instruction is a teacher’s ability to manage his/her classroom. The rigor that students face when they participate in such practice can cause them to experience difficulties with comprehending information and performing skills. This can lead to students displaying off-task and defiant behaviors. Therefore, strategies for redirecting students’ effort and behaviors will be shared.

Evidence

Incorporating students' voice is a practice that schools and districts at large use to increase student achievement and engagement. Research conducted by Gretchen Brion-Meisels, a faculty member at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, indicates that student achievement at the secondary level is more likely when students are included "as stakeholders in their own learning."

This presentation combines theory, research and student performance data to demonstrate the impact of incorporating students' voice has on academic achievement.

The strategies that will be discussed are classroom-proven. The presenter's implementation of the strategies that will be discussed led to over 90% of his students meeting or exceeding the proficient level for Reading and social studies on the Georgia state assessment in 2014. Further evidence of the positive impact that these practices have on student achievement is demonstrated in the publication of one of the presenter's former student's editorial, Common Core is a Life Changer (My AJC.com).

Biographical Sketch

Quinton Granville is a Literacy Trainer who has over twenty-three years of experience in the fields of education and youth development. He has been featured on LDC.org and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation websites. His skills and abilities related to educating young people and training teachers were honed as a teacher and social worker in Atlanta, Georgia. He has worked with organizations such as Atlanta Public Schools, the YWCA of Greater Atlanta, Teach for America and the Southern Regional Education Board. He specializes in training teachers to plan and implement college and career aligned classroom instruction. He currently works with school districts in New York, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and Mississippi.